

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

v.

BHAVDIP SANGHAVI

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§

CRIMINAL NO. H-17-312-2

PLEA AGREEMENT

The United States of America, by and through Abe Martinez, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas and Celia Moyer, Assistant United States Attorney, the defendant, **BHAVDIP SANGHAVI**, and the defendant's counsel, Sharon Hemphill, pursuant to Rule 11(c)(1)(A) and 11(c)(1)(B) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, state that they have entered into an agreement, the terms and conditions of which are as follows:

The Defendant's Agreement

1. The defendant agrees to plead guilty to Count One of the Indictment. Count One charge the defendant with Conspiracy to Commit Wire Fraud in violation of Title 18, United States Code, Sections 1349 and 1343. The defendant, by entering this plea agrees that he is waiving any right to have the facts that the law makes essential to the punishment either charged in the indictment, or proved to a jury or proven beyond a reasonable doubt.

Punishment Range

2. The statutory maximum penalty for each violation of Title 18, United States Code, Section 1349 and 1343 is imprisonment for up to 20 years and a fine of not more than \$250,000. Additionally, the defendant may receive a term of supervised release after imprisonment of up to 3 years. *See* Title 18, United States Code, §§ 3559(a) and 3583(b). Defendant acknowledges and understands that if he should violate the conditions of any period of supervised release which may be imposed as part of his sentence, then defendant may be imprisoned for the entire term of supervised release, without credit for time already served on the term of supervised release prior to such violation. Title 18, United States Code, §§ 3559(a) and 3583(e)(3). Defendant understands that he cannot have the imposition or execution of the sentence suspended, nor is he eligible for parole.

Mandatory Special Assessment

3. Pursuant to Title 18, United States Code, section 3013(a)(2)(A), immediately after sentencing, Defendant will pay to the Clerk of the United States District Court a special assessment in the amount of one hundred dollars (\$100.00) per count of conviction. The payment will be by cashier's check or money order, payable to the Clerk of the United States District Court, c/o District Clerk's Office,

P.O. Box 61010, Houston, Texas 77208, Attention: Finance.

Immigration Consequences

4. Defendant recognizes that pleading guilty may have consequences with respect to his immigration status if he is not a citizen of the United States. Defendant understands that if he is not a citizen of the United States, by pleading guilty he may be removed from the United States, denied citizenship, and denied admission to the United States in the future. Defendant's attorney has advised Defendant of the potential immigration consequences resulting from Defendant's plea of guilty.

Cooperation

5. The parties understand this agreement carries the potential for a motion for departure under Section 5K1.1 of the Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant understands and agrees that whether such a motion is filed will be determined solely by the United States through the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas. Should Defendant's cooperation, in the sole judgment and discretion of the United States, amount to "substantial assistance," the United States reserves the sole right to file a motion for departure pursuant to Section 5K1.1 of the United States Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant further agrees to persist in that plea through sentencing, fully cooperate with the United States, not oppose the forfeiture of assets

contemplated in paragraph 22 of this agreement. Defendant understands and agrees that the United States will request that sentencing be deferred until that cooperation is complete.

6. Defendant understands and agrees that “fully cooperate,” as that term is used herein, includes providing all information relating to any criminal activity known to Defendant, including but not limited to firearms, gangs, aggravated assaults, drugs, bank robberies, and murders. Defendant understands that such information includes both state and federal offenses arising therefrom. In that regard:

- (a) Defendant agrees that this plea agreement binds only the United States Attorney for the Southern District of Texas and Defendant; it does not bind any other United States Attorney or any other unit of the Department of Justice;
- (b) Defendant agrees to testify truthfully as a witness before a grand jury or in any other judicial or administrative proceeding when called upon to do so by the United States. Defendant further agrees to waive his Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination for the purpose of this agreement;
- (c) Defendant agrees to voluntarily attend any interviews and conferences as the United States may request;
- (d) Defendant agrees to provide truthful, complete and accurate information and testimony and understands any false statements made by the defendant to the Grand Jury or at any court proceeding (criminal or civil), or to a government agent or attorney, can and will be

prosecuted under the appropriate perjury, false statement, or obstruction statutes;

(e) Defendant agrees to provide to the United States all documents in his possession or under his control relating to all areas of inquiry and investigation; and

(f) Should the recommended departure, if any, not meet Defendant's expectations, the Defendant understands that he remains bound by the terms of this agreement and cannot, for that reason alone, withdraw his plea.

Waiver of Appeal and Collateral Review

7. Defendant is aware that Title 28, United States Code, section 1291, and Title 18, United States Code, section 3742, afford a defendant the right to appeal the conviction and sentence imposed. Defendant is also aware that Title 28, United States Code, section 2255, affords the right to contest or "collaterally attack" a conviction or sentence after the judgment of conviction and sentence has become final. Defendant knowingly and voluntarily waives the right to appeal or "collaterally attack" the conviction and sentence, except that Defendant does not waive the right to raise a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel on direct appeal, if otherwise permitted, or on collateral review in a motion under Title 28, United States Code, section 2255. In the event Defendant files a notice of appeal following the imposition of the sentence or later collaterally attacks his conviction or sentence,

the United States will assert its rights under this agreement and seek specific performance of this waiver.

8. In agreeing to these waivers, Defendant is aware that a sentence has not yet been determined by the Court. Defendant is also aware that any estimate of the possible sentencing range under the sentencing guidelines that he/she may have received from his counsel, the United States or the Probation Office, is a prediction and not a promise, did not induce his guilty plea, and is not binding on the United States, the Probation Office or the Court. The United States does not make any promise or representation concerning what sentence the defendant will receive. Defendant further understands and agrees that the United States Sentencing Guidelines are “effectively advisory” to the Court. *See United States v. Booker*, 125 S. Ct. 738 (2005). Accordingly, Defendant understands that, although the Court must consult the Sentencing Guidelines and must take them into account when sentencing Defendant, the Court is not bound to follow the Sentencing Guidelines nor sentence Defendant within the calculated guideline range.

9. Defendant understands and agrees that each and all waivers contained in the Agreement are made in exchange for the concessions made by the United States in this plea agreement.

The United States' Agreements

10. The United States agrees to each of the following:

- (a) At the time of sentencing, the United States agrees not to oppose Defendant's anticipated request to the Court and the United States Probation Office that he receive a two (2)- level downward adjustment under § 3E1.1(a) of the Sentencing Guidelines should Defendant accept responsibility as contemplated by the Sentencing Guidelines (U.S.S.G.);
- (b) If Defendant qualifies for an adjustment under U.S.S.G. § 3E1.1(a) and Defendant's offense level is 16 or greater, the United States may move for an additional one (1)-level downward adjustment based on the timeliness of the plea or the expeditious manner in which Defendant provided complete information regarding his role in the offense; and
- (c) As part of this Plea Agreement, the United States reserves the right to, but is not obligated to, file a motion seeking a downward departure from the applicable Sentencing Guidelines, pursuant to Section 5K.1 of the Sentencing Guidelines (or Rule 35(b) of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure) if (a) in the government's sole discretion, it determines that the defendant has provided substantial truthful assistance in all investigations and prosecutions of all other crimes and\or persons about which the defendant is questioned by any federal, state, and local law enforcement authorities and if (b) in the government's sole discretion, it is determined by the government that such a departure is warranted. The defendant understands and agrees that any decision of whether or not to file a 5K1.1 motion for downward departure rests within the sole discretion of the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas and that he has no legal rights whatsoever to seek any judicial review in any court, whether in the form of an appeal or motion for review or otherwise, of the government's decision regarding whether or not to seek a 5K1.1 downward departure at sentencing or thereafter.

Agreement Binding - Southern District of Texas Only

11. The United States agrees that it will not further criminally prosecute Defendant in the Southern District of Texas for offenses arising from conduct charged in the Indictment. This Plea Agreement binds only the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of Texas and Defendant. It does not bind any other United States Attorney. The United States will bring this Plea Agreement and the full extent of Defendant's cooperation to the attention of other prosecuting offices if requested.

United States' Non-Waiver of Appeal

12. The United States reserves the right to carry out its responsibilities under the Sentencing Guidelines. Specifically, the United States reserves the right:

- (a) to bring its version of the facts of this case, including its evidence file and any investigative files, to the attention of the Probation Office in connection with that office's preparation of a presentence report;
- (b) to set forth or dispute sentencing factors or facts material to sentencing;
- (c) to seek resolution of such factors or facts in conference with Defendant's counsel and the Probation Office;
- (d) to file a pleading relating to these issues, in accordance with U.S.S.G. § 6A1.2 and Title 18, United States Code, § 3553(a); and
- (e) to appeal the sentence imposed or the manner in which it was determined.

Sentence Determination

13. Defendant is aware that the sentence will be imposed after consideration of the Sentencing Guidelines, which are only advisory, as well as the provisions of Title 18, United States Code, § 3553(a). Defendant nonetheless acknowledges and agrees that the Court has authority to impose any sentence up to and including the statutory maximum set for the offense(s) to which Defendant pleads guilty, and that the sentence to be imposed is within the sole discretion of the sentencing judge after the Court has consulted the applicable Sentencing Guidelines. Defendant understands and agrees the parties' positions regarding the application of the Sentencing Guidelines do not bind the Court, and that the sentence imposed is within the discretion of the sentencing judge. If the Court should impose any sentence up to the maximum established by statute, or should the Court order any or all of the sentences imposed to run consecutively, Defendant cannot, for that reason alone, withdraw a guilty plea, and will remain bound to fulfill all of the obligations under this Plea Agreement.

Rights at Trial

14. Defendant represents to the Court that he is satisfied that his attorney has rendered effective assistance. Defendant understands that by entering into this Agreement, he surrenders certain rights as provided in this Plea Agreement. Defendant understands that those rights include the following:

- (a) If Defendant persisted in a plea of not guilty to the charges, defendant would have the right to a speedy jury trial with the assistance of counsel. The trial may be conducted by a judge sitting without a jury if Defendant, the United States, and the court all agree;
- (b) At a trial, the United States would be required to present witnesses and other evidence against Defendant. Defendant would have the opportunity to confront those witnesses and his attorney would be allowed to cross-examine them. In turn, Defendant could, but would not be required to, present witnesses and other evidence on his own behalf. If the witnesses for Defendant would not appear voluntarily, he could require their attendance through the subpoena power of the court; and
- (c) At a trial, Defendant could rely on a privilege against self-incrimination and decline to testify, and no inference of guilt could be drawn from such refusal to testify. However, if Defendant desired to do so, he/she could testify on his/her own behalf.

Factual Basis for Guilty Plea

15. Defendant is pleading guilty because he is guilty of the charges contained in Count One of the Indictment. If this case were to proceed to trial, the United States could prove each element of the offense beyond a reasonable doubt.

The following facts, among others would be offered to establish Defendant's guilt:

From June 2015, through May 2017, the Defendants, Vedas Engineer and Bhavdip Sanghavi, agreed with each other and others to commit the crime of wire fraud. Co-conspirators called victim taxpayers across the United States, pressuring them to pay money to resolved alleged tax debts immediately as part of an I.R.S. tax impersonation scam. The Defendants would provide the co-conspirator with the name of a "runner" in the Houston area (within the Southern District of Texas) who would be the intended recipient of the transfer that would be transmitted in interstate commerce. The victim would comply with instructions given by the co-conspirator, and wire money to an identified recipient. The Defendants would drive the runners to pick up the wire transfers from Western Union, Money Gram, and later from bank accounts the Defendants had the runners open. The Defendants would then take the entirety of the transfer from the runner; paying the runner a small amount per transaction. Runners were also paid if they referred others to work for the Defendants.

Runner Deborah Gladney Peters was interviewed. She stated she worked for the Defendants in June 2015 picking up Western Union and MoneyGram transfers in Houston, Texas, including a Western Union transfer from victim L.C.

of \$3,794. Victim L.C. was interviewed and stated she sent several wires from Indiana to other states, including Houston, Texas, believing she was paying a tax debt to the I.R.S. Runner Chelsea Gomes was also interviewed and stated she worked for the Defendants in August 2016. The Defendants had her open a bank account for their purposes, and she accepted a bank transfer of \$8,900 from victim A.L. Gomes gave the entire \$8,900 to the Defendants. A.L. wired the money from Pennsylvania to Houston, Texas and believed she was paying an outstanding tax debt to the I.R.S.

The Government would introduce evidence from Western Union, MoneyGram, Bank records, statements from runners and information from the victims of this I.R.S. Impersonation Scam to show that approximately, and not limited to, \$1,715,686.96, has been wired in interstate commerce to the Defendants during this conspiracy. The government has not included in this proffer all facts within its knowledge regarding the conspiracy count charged in this case. The limited purpose of this statement of facts is to demonstrate that a factual basis exists to support the Defendant's plea to the offense set forth in the Indictment.

Breach of Plea Agreement

16. If defendant should fail in any way to fulfill completely all of the obligations under this plea agreement, the United States will be released from its obligations under the plea agreement, and the defendant's plea and sentence will stand. If at any time defendant retains, conceals or disposes of assets in violation of this plea agreement, or if defendant knowingly withholds evidence or is otherwise not completely truthful with the United States, then the United States may move the Court to set aside the guilty plea and reinstate prosecution. Any information and documents that have been disclosed by defendant, whether prior to or subsequent to this plea agreement, and all leads derived therefrom, will be used against defendant in any prosecution.

17. Whether the defendant has breached any provision of this plea agreement shall be determined solely by the United States through the United States Attorney's Office, whose judgment in that regard is final.

Restitution, Forfeiture, and Fines

18. This Plea Agreement is being entered into by the United States on the basis of Defendant's express representation that he will make a full and complete disclosure of all assets over which he exercises direct or indirect control, or in which

he has any financial interest. Defendant agrees not to dispose of any assets or take any action that would effect a transfer of property in which he has an interest, unless Defendant obtains the prior written permission of the United States.

19. Defendant agrees to make complete financial disclosure by truthfully executing a sworn financial statement (Form OBD-500) by the deadline set by the United States, or if no deadline is set, prior to sentencing. Defendant agrees to authorize the release of all financial information requested by the United States, including, but not limited to, executing authorization forms permitting the United States to obtain tax information, bank account records, credit histories, and social security information. Defendant agrees to discuss and answer any questions by the United States relating to Defendant's complete financial disclosure.

20. Defendant agrees to take all steps necessary to pass clear title to forfeitable assets to the United States and to assist fully in the collection of restitution and fines, including, but not limited to, surrendering title, executing a warranty deed, signing a consent decree, stipulating to facts regarding the transfer of title and the basis for the forfeiture, and signing any other documents necessary to effectuate such transfer. Defendant also agrees to direct any banks which have custody of his assets to deliver all funds and records of such assets to the United States.

21. Defendant understands that forfeiture, restitution, and fines are separate components of sentencing and are separate obligations.

Fines

22. Defendant understands that under the Sentencing Guidelines the Court is permitted to order Defendant to pay a fine that is sufficient to reimburse the government for the costs of any imprisonment or term of supervised release, if any. Defendant agrees that any fine imposed by the Court will be due and payable immediately, and Defendant will not attempt to avoid or delay payment. Defendant waives the right to challenge the fine in any manner, including by direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding.

Forfeiture

23. Defendant stipulates and agrees that the property listed in the Indictment's Notice of Forfeiture (and in any supplemental Notices) is subject to forfeiture, and Defendant agrees to the forfeiture of that property.

24. Defendant stipulates and agrees that Defendant obtained at least \$850,000.00 from the criminal offense charged in Count One of the Indictment, and that the factual basis for his guilty plea supports the forfeiture of \$475,000.00.

Defendant stipulates and admits that one or more of the conditions set forth in Title 21, United States Code, section 853(p), exists. Defendant agrees to forfeit any of his property, or his interest in property, up to the value of any unpaid portion of Defendant's property in substitution, up to a total forfeiture of \$475,000.00. Defendant agrees to the imposition of a personal money judgment in that amount.

25. Defendant agrees to waive any and all interest in any asset which is the subject of a related administrative or judicial forfeiture proceeding, whether criminal or civil, federal or state.

26. Defendant consents to the order of forfeiture becoming final as to Defendant immediately following this guilty plea, pursuant to Federal Rule of Criminal Procedure 32.2(b)(4)(A).

27. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 7 above, Defendant waives the right to challenge the forfeiture of property in any manner, including by direct appeal or in a collateral proceeding.

Complete Agreement

28. This written Plea Agreement, including the attached addendum of Defendant and his attorney, constitutes the complete Plea Agreement between the United States, Defendant, and his counsel. No promises or representations have been made by the United States except as set forth in writing in this Plea Agreement. Defendant acknowledges that no threats have been made against him and that he is pleading guilty freely and voluntarily because he is guilty.

29. Any modification of this Plea Agreement must be in writing and signed by all parties.

Filed at Houston, Texas, on 12/01/, 2017.


BHAVDIP SANGHAVI
Defendant

Subscribed and sworn to before me on December 1, 2017.

DAVID J. BRADLEY, Clerk
UNITED STATES DISTRICT CLERK

By: Evan M. Cawthon
Deputy United States District Clerk

APPROVED:

ABE MARTINEZ
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY

By:


Celia Moyer
Assistant United States Attorney
Southern District of Texas
Telephone: (713) 567-9000


Sharon Hemphill
Attorney for Defendant

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PLEA AGREEMENT - ADDENDUM

I have fully explained to defendant his rights with respect to the pending information. I have reviewed the provisions of the United States Sentencing Commission's Guidelines Manual and Policy Statements and I have fully and carefully explained to Defendant the provisions of those Guidelines which may apply in this case. I have also explained to Defendant that the Sentencing Guidelines are only advisory and the court may sentence Defendant up to the maximum allowed by statute per count of conviction. Further, I have carefully reviewed every part of this plea agreement with Defendant. To my knowledge, Defendant's decision to enter into this agreement is an informed and voluntary one.



Sharon Hemphill
Attorney for Defendant

12-1-17

Date

I have consulted with my attorney and fully understand all my rights with respect to the information pending against me. My attorney has fully explained and I understand all my rights with respect to the provisions of the United States Sentencing Commission's Guidelines Manual which may apply in my case. I have read and carefully reviewed every part of this plea agreement with my attorney. I understand this agreement and I voluntarily agree to its terms.



BHAVDIP SANGHAVI

Defendant

12/01/17

Date